

THE CLAIMS

Please amend as follows:

1. (canceled).

2. (canceled).

3. (canceled).

4. (canceled).

5. (canceled)

6. (canceled).

7. (canceled).

8. (canceled).

9. (canceled).

10. (currently amended) A fender assembly according to claim [[9]] 26 wherein said U-shaped rod of each sub-assembly is guided for vertical sliding movement by means of a pair of tubular sleeves fixed on opposite sides of the mounting plate adjacent bottom corners thereof, each said upstanding leg passing through a respective said sleeve, with each of the coil springs having its lower end abutting against the upper end of its associated said sleeve.

11. (original) A fender assembly according to claim 10 wherein the upper end of each said upstanding leg is threaded and threadably receives a retention nut against which the upper end of a respective said spring abuts.

12. (canceled).

13. (canceled).

14. (canceled).

15. (canceled).

16. (canceled).

17. (canceled).

18. (canceled).

19. (canceled).

20. (canceled).

21. (canceled).

22. (canceled).

23. (currently amended) A fender assembly adapted for attachment to a fixed support surface of a dock structure at a predetermined height above the ground, said fender assembly comprising: a pair of laterally spaced apart parallel fender sub-assemblies, each sub-assembly comprising:

 a vertical guide track which, in use, is fixed with respect to the support surface,

 a vertically disposed elongate fender guided for slidable movement along said guide track by a longitudinally extending keeper portion co-operable with the guide track, and

 spring loaded fender restraining means co-acting with and adapted to resist movement of the fender when displaced downwards from a normal at rest position by an externally applied force, said fender restraining means being movable between a retracted position wherein the fender is supported in its said normal at rest position and an extended position wherein the fender is displaced

downwards from said at rest position, the fender restraining means comprising a vertically slidable U-shaped rod which has a pair of upstanding legs extending along opposite sides of the fender, and a transversely extending bridging portion interconnecting the legs, said bridging portion having a forwardly projecting abutment secured thereto and abutting the fender whereby any downwards movement of the fender causes simultaneously downward movement of the U-shaped rod, and wherein said restraining means includes a pair of compressible coil springs each supported on a respective said upstanding leg and extending along its length,

wherein each fender sub-assembly is operable independent of the other of the pair.

24. (canceled).

25. (currently amended) A fender assembly according to claim ~~24~~ 23 wherein the fender of each sub-assembly is a solid rubber or rubber-like block and wherein the keeper portion comprises a slotted keyway extending centrally along ~~its~~ a rear face of the block, said guide track slidably engaging within said keyway.

26. (previously presented) A fender assembly according to claim 25 wherein the keyway of each sub-assembly extends between top and bottom faces of the fender and said guide track has a length which approximates the length of the keyway, and wherein said abutment is located adjacent a lower end of the track when the fender restraining means is in its retracted position.